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Official Records

Thirtieth special session

5th plenary meeting
Thursday, 21 April 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President Mr. Lykketoft ..... (Denmark)

In the absence of the President, Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia), Vice-President, too the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

General debate

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ollanta Humala Tasso, President of the Republic of Peru.

President Humala Tasso (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru has the honour to address the General Assembly on the important topic of the drug problem. In that connection I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to the Peruvian model, which has been a successful one. Generally, in the case of countries that produce the coca leaf for illegal use, the coca plant grows where the State has very little actual presence. That is the case today in Peru. As a consequence, during its five years in power, our Government has worked to reduce the area used to grow the coca leaf for illegal purposes by more than 50 per cent. When we came to power, about 63,000 hectares were being used for the purpose of producing coca for drug-trafficking. Today, however, we have reduced that area to between 33,000 and 34,000 hectares. Our model has therefore been successful.

Another theme that I want to touch upon is that of respect for the ancestral use of coca leaves by the peoples of Peru and Bolivia. We fully respect that tradition.

The third question is how to develop those areas where States have been barely present. We are doing this through educational, infrastructure, social and health policies. Thus, in those areas that were previously exposed to such illicit economies as drug trafficking, we have brought roads, the Internet and scholarship programmes so as to give the children of farmers engaged in raising illegal products the possibility of receiving higher education.

We also implement basic sanitation programmes. When our Government came to power, only one family in three in these areas had access to drinking water. Today, after almost five years under our Government, more than two families in three on average have access to drinking water. Similarly, in these areas only 33 to 35 per cent had access to electricity. Today, more than 80 per cent of rural areas have electricity.

With regard to health policy, we are building health centres and hospitals so that the people in these areas can enjoy health services where they live rather than having to travel to other areas of the country. We are also providing training so that instead of growing coca they can grow other products. Indeed, in areas where coca was traditionally grown, Peru is cultivating and exporting cocoa and organic coffee. Today, Peru is the eighth-largest producer of cocoa worldwide thanks to the fact that cocoa is being produced in areas where coca was previously cultivated illegally. That is what we are doing on our side. We have been able to train more than 120,000 families in product diversification.

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The question I would therefore pose is: what are the drug-consuming countries doing? Drugs are produced because there are countries and societies that are able to pay for every gram of cocaine. The question is what these consuming countries are doing to counter the high demand for cocaine and drugs in general that they have created. I believe that this is an issue of common but differentiated responsibilities. We believe that there has to be genuine political will on both sides.

As for Peru, we are doing our job. We need strategic partnerships — not collaborative or cooperative relationships — with the United States, Europe and countries where drugs are consumed. They must understand that if we do not come together we will not be able to defeat one of the greatest evils on the planet, alongside the threats posed by global warming and others. That is why the Government of Peru has worked constantly and tirelessly for almost five years to fulfil its tasks, set concrete goals and send the clear message that we are fighting the scourge of drugs. What we need today is to demand that the industrialized first world also rise to the fight against drugs and forge a strategic partnership — and not, I reiterate, a relationship of cooperation, because cooperation does not entail responsibilities.

We all have a responsibility to fulfil. Peru is doing so, and on the basis of our moral stance and actions we also demand that those who have the money to pay for drugs do their job and build a strategic partnership to fight this evil.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

President Morales Ayma (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to start my address by recalling that since the 1980s the poorly named "war on drugs" has led to a scenario in which the sovereignty of countries is systematically violated and public health conditions and internal security have deteriorated, creating an environment of destabilization, intervention, interference and manipulation of democracies among our peoples. For example, before the adoption of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs in 1961, there were only 4,700 hectares of coca in Bolivia, but after its criminalization cultivation rose by more than 1,000 per cent, reaching 52,900 hectares at its height, in 1989.

Similarly, the data confirm that the war on drugs has failed. Drug use has increased throughout the world. It is estimated that a total of 246 million people aged 15 to 64 consumed illicit drugs in 2013. This figure was 150 million in the late 1990s. We have seen an increase in drug consumption of approximately 40 per cent over the past two decades. The rate of cocaine consumption in the United States is 1.6 per cent, while the world average is 0.4 per cent. By what standard of morality does the United States certify or decertify countries when we all know that nothing will be done to reduce this demand and that the highest number of cocaine users live in that country?

According to data provided by the United Nations, the illegal drug-trafficking economy is growing at a progressive pace throughout the world and by 2013 represented a retail value of $330 billion, despite the $100 billion spent on the global drug-control system. For all these reasons, we must consider in depth the geopolitical background of the war on drugs.

With the end of the Cold War and Operation Condor, the United States hoped to reduce the need to organize coups d'état and thereby provide political justification for its support for dictatorships. I believe that the drug problem offered a crafty pretext for applying an imperialist logic of control of national police and armed forces in order to intervene in the administration of States. The empire authorized this hypocritical war to lower the profile of its interventionist geopolitical military strategy in areas rich in natural resources in order to control and plunder them.

Wherever United States military bases were installed we saw a rise in drug trafficking, crime, privatizing Governments, judicial and police systems ruled by narcocorruption, illegal wealth and corrupt, subservient militaries at the service of the empire. Military bases, banking secrecy and the criminalization of the coca leaf and cultures are instruments of geopolitical control. We Bolivians therefore decided to liberate ourselves by nationalizing the fight against drug trafficking and proposing a dignified and sovereign model that guarantees respect for human rights and Mother Earth within the framework of common and shared responsibility, and with social participation and control.

With the implementation of our policy, we were able to decrease coca-bush cultivation by 34 per cent between 2011 to 2014, reaching a net surface area of

20,400 hectares, as was documented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in its *Coca Crop Monitoring Survey* for Bolivia in 2014. That report confirmed that we have the lowest rate of coca cultivation in 10 years. Similarly, the International Narcotics Control Board, in its 2015 report, acknowledged for the first time Bolivia's successful actions aimed at reaching lower levels of coca production, with its share in Andean region production down to 15 per cent. Bolivia holds the record for the regional reduction rate in coca cultivation, demonstrating the success of the Bolivian model.

We appreciate the assistance provided by the European Union in the framework of shared responsibility, without any political preconditions, which has strengthened control mechanisms through social participation. We also commend the role of the United Nations in Bolivia, which has contributed to strengthening our institutional capacity to confront organized crime.

I call on this special session to take concrete actions to free ourselves from the problem of drugs — without any pretence for domination — dismantle the North American bases, put an end to interventionism and unilateral verification and adopt a resolution to end banking confidentiality once and for all.

Finally, the Plurinational State of Bolivia believes that we need to have a broad and comprehensive debate, based on the specific realities of each State, within the framework of the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention and based on respect for each State's internal legislation.

I would like to take this opportunity to show everyone a coca leaf, which is green in its natural state. This coca leaf in its natural state, as a product of Mother Earth, is a sacred leaf, which has fallen victim to drug-trafficking in the interests of capitalism, and is unjustly used as a pretext for domination. The coca leaf is our healthy and nutritious food, our medicine and part of our community spirit, culture and identity. It is our offering to life, not to death.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, President of the Republic of Colombia.

President Santos Calderón (*spoke in Spanish*): In 1912, when the International Opium Convention was signed at The Hague, its stated goal was to bring about the gradual suppression of the abuse of opium, morphine and cocaine. That declaration was made over a century ago. Half a century later, in 1961, in the same venue, the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs was adopted. Ten years later, President Richard Nixon, the then-President of the country that is the biggest consumer of drugs, declared the war on drugs. I am here today to speak on behalf of the country that has made the most sacrifices and paid the highest price as a result of that war.

The first question that we have to ask ourselves, when considering those years-long, decades-long and centuries-long efforts, is the following: after so many lives cut short, so much corruption and violence and so many young lives wasting away in prisons, can we say that we have won the war? Can we say, at least, that we are winning it? Unfortunately, the answer is a resounding no. We have neither won, nor are we winning. Logic and common sense therefore require that we rethink the issue. If the treatment that we have prescribed — which has been based primarily on suppression — has not solved the problem by now, it is time to reformulate that treatment. And that is why we are here.

At the Summit of the Americas held in Cartagena in 2012, I spoke of the need for an in-depth and evidence-based review, free from prejudices and ideologies, in order to come up with a global, results-oriented strategy on the drug problem. Within the Organization of American States, we are moving forward in that direction.

On the international level, we proposed, together with Mexico and Guatemala, making this special session a reality. We have adopted a final outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) that takes a step in the right direction, approaching a more comprehensive and balanced vision in the fight against drugs. But we have to acknowledge that that is not enough and that there is a very long way to go.

What has been achieved primarily? It was accepted that the drug conventions included a margin of flexibility in their implementation and that they must be adapted to the particular circumstances of each State. Progress was also made in ensuring access to controlled substances for medical and scientific use, as is already the case in Colombia, and in seeking measures to reduce the risks and damage caused by consumption.

And what remains to be done? I would answer that much still remains to be done. What remains is to agree that human rights and the conventions that recognize and protect them cannot be relegated to second place with regard to the drug conventions. Numerous States throughout the world, including Colombia, do not consider the death penalty to be an appropriate punishment under any circumstances and that, at the very least, a moratorium on its application to drug-related offences must be adopted, while consensus is being built for its eradication. Another sign of progress is that in the document we have included alternative punishments to prison sentences and declared the importance of the principle of proportionality in sentencing.

Similarly, from the standpoint of human rights, it still needs to be stated clearly that drug use is a public-health problem and, as such, does not warrant criminal treatment. I have imagined the following scenario, and I propose that everyone present do the same. Ask any mother whether she would prefer that her drug-addict son spend years in prison or whether she would prefer that he receive treatment with health services for rehabilitation. No mother would choose to send her son to prison, because all mothers want the best for their children and because prisons are for criminals, not for addicts. Let me note in passing that addicts often become criminals while in prison.

We still must recognize that repressive measures have impacted, in unbalanced way, the weakest links in the drug-trafficking chain. Small farmers, the so-called mules and consumers are filling prisons around the world. How do I explain to a humble Colombian peasant that he is going to prison for growing marijuana when anyone in the states of Colorado and Washington in the United States can grow, sell and consume it freely? It makes no sense. We need to focus our fight on the strongest links in the chain, which are the major drug dealers, the suppliers of chemical precursors and the organizations that facilitate money-laundering. We have to hit the mafias where it hurts them most. How do we do that? By chasing their ill-gotten gains and depriving them of their exorbitant profits, which have generated so much violence and corruption. We must honestly recognize that, just as our world is not free from alcohol, tobacco or violence, we will not have a drug-free world. However, there is an enormous range of options that we can explore to improve our performance against that scourge, thereby protecting human beings and providing opportunities to rural communities that are being held hostage by drug trafficking.

Colombia is not advocating the legalization of illicit drugs. Let there be no doubt that Colombia will continue to combat organized crime, work to replace illegal crops with lawful alternatives and intercept boats and aeroplanes used to transport drugs, because for Colombia combating drugs is not only a moral imperative, but also a matter of national security.

We have been successful on many fronts. We crushed the major cartels, which were regarded as invincible in Medellín, Cali and the North Valley. Today we are working to make peace in our country with guerrilla groups that have participated in the drug-trafficking chain to make them into allies in eliminating illegal crops and in promoting alternative production projects. If we succeed, that will represent a historic and favourable turnaround, not only for Colombia but also for the entire world. Today we are working against the small cartels, because criminals adapt and change, and the States that are fighting them must do so as well. We cannot let our guard down. We are taking a brave step forward, but we must continue to move ahead. The debate on drug policy does not end with this special session. It is just beginning.

We must work to bring together the various positions so that, in 2019, when we assess what has been done under the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, we will have achieved the goal of a new global consensus on drug policies. This must be an expanded debate that also involves the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Secretary-General and the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the specialized agencies dealing with health, human rights and development, and civil society and academia.

Also, so that we can be as objective as possible, we need the support of a group specifically committed to reviewing global policies and goals so as better to prepare us for 2019. In that regard, we agree with the proposal put forth by several countries to request that the Secretary-General establish a high-level group of eminent persons to help assess the bases of our current policies and propose the necessary reforms.

As it has done until now, Colombia will continue to do its utmost on this issue. We will continue to cooperate and collaborate with other nations so that they can benefit from our experience. We have already

been doing that in various countries in Central America and in other parts of the world.

Today we have initiated an irreversible process aimed at changing drug policies, and we will continue that process. For the well-being of humankind, we must continue.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Georgios Pamboridis, Minister of Health of the Republic of Cyprus.

Mr. Pamboridis (Cyprus): I appreciate this opportunity to address this high-level meeting on behalf of the Republic of Cyprus. Cyprus strongly believes that the 2016 special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem provides us with an opportunity to achieve feasible and supportable solutions to the world drug problem, as well as to find common ground based on international treaties.

The Republic of Cyprus fully aligns itself with, and subscribes to, the European Union position, which supports a balanced and evidenced-based approach with its main focus on the individual and the protection of society as a whole. We consider drug dependence to be a public-health and human rights problem and priority that has to be managed in an integrated manner that recognizes its complexity. Let me also welcome Ms. Margaret Chan's call for a public-health approach to drugs.

Cyprus, together with our fellow European Union member States, maintains a strong and unequivocal opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances, and especially with regard to drug-related offences. We believe that the death penalty undermines human dignity, for one thing because errors made in its application are irreversible. We also strongly believe that penalties provided for under national law for all drug-related offences should be proportionate to the severity of the offence. Along those lines, alternatives to imprisonment should be offered to drug users in order to keep them out of prison and provide them with a second chance to seek treatment. That is what we do now in our country.

In order to address the challenge posed by drugs and the negative related consequences, we believe that drug policies should promote evidence-based and cost-effective measures. Such measures have been implemented in the European Union and have proved to be effective in reducing the number of drug-related deaths, crime and infectious diseases. That includes harm-reduction measures such as opioid-substitution therapy, needle and syringe-exchange programmes and naloxone provision. We strongly urge Member States to consider implementing or reinforcing such measures in the context of the drug-demand-reduction part of the balanced approach.

Cyprus would also like to emphasize the following issues as important points for consideration today: access to controlled substances for use by the scientific and medical community should be increased; the participatory role of civil society and the scientific community in all aspects of drug policy should be promoted; when addressing the drug phenomenon, the different needs of men, women, young people and children should be recognized; the challenge of new, constantly emerging psychoactive substances and the role played by the Internet in the drug supply should be addressed; and the promotion of an effective law-enforcement policy towards the illicit production and manufacturing of and trafficking in drugs should also be an integral part of the balanced approach.

We regret that the vision of a drug-free world is not a realistic one. Nevertheless, everyone participating in this session must strive to establish achievable benchmarks and policies that will succeed, thereby benefiting the lives of people who struggle with drug dependence.

Member States need to acknowledge that the global approach to the drug issue needs a major revision. We are here to voice the concerns of our respective Governments. We are also here to voice the demand of our respective citizens to put drug-law reform on the agenda. The benefits of harm-reduction approaches have never been so clear. This is a historic opportunity for the global community to reconsider its approach to drugs and to prioritize health, human rights and safety.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Tayeb Louh, Minister of Justice of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

Mr. Louh (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like, on behalf of Algeria, to commend the President and Acting Presidents of this special session on the able way in which they have presided over the session.

My country aligns itself with the statement delivered by Mr. Mohammed Hassan Zaroug, the Chair of the delegation of the Sudan, on behalf of the African Group (see A/S-30/PV.2).

My country confirms that the threats posed by the drug problem are not traditional risks any more, but are closely linked with the financing of terrorism, which is threatening both humankind and the ordinary democratic process in the world, unless the international community combats it effectively. The increase in drug trafficking is motivated by the profits that illicit trade yields. That phenomenon is also able to take advantage of the climate of insecurity and political instability, which enables narcotrafficking to flourish and become one of the most important sources of the financing of terrorism, in addition to the profits from the illegal sale of oil and ransom payments in return for freeing hostages.

As a transit country, Algeria is deeply concerned by the weakness of the policies adopted so far to limit the supply of drugs. We also find that decriminalizing the use of drugs, particularly cannabis, for purposes other than those specified in the conventions is a retreat from the gains achieved in earlier decades. In the context of our reform programme, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Algeria, Mr. Bouteflika, is implementing a national strategy to strengthen the role of civil society in raising awareness of the hazards that the scourge of drugs represents, and to give due consideration to treating drug users as a health problem.

As for drug traffickers and their ties to organized crime, we have continuously updated our legal framework. We have also established specialized judicial entities to look into drugs, terrorism and organized crime, in addition to a legal framework for the protection of witnesses. The judiciary has also strengthened international cooperation in the collection of data and evidence and in the confiscation of the yield from drug trafficking.

Algeria participated in the negotiations that led to the formulation of the recommendations that we will adopt at this session. Here, I would like to welcome the consensus that we have reached as we look forward to translating those recommendations into practical solutions, in accordance with the contents of the conventions that represent the main framework for combating the scourge of drugs.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Heraldo Muñoz, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Chile.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I come from Latin America, one of the regions most affected by the world drug problem. As we have heard this morning directly from some of our regional Presidents, every day our region sees the most tragic expressions of the dreadful drug scourge in its cities and streets. As a result, we have accumulated experience. We have acquired lessons learned and developed models for public policies through which, with greater or lesser success, we have responded to each facet of the problem.

My country, Chile, has made a commitment to observing and promoting the conventions and the international drug-control programme. Members of the international community are responsible for reaching agreements, making progress and complying with their objectives. That task is not an easy one. The various types of consumption, illicit trafficking and its connected problems vary from country to country, a situation that makes the debate complex. Moreover, it is difficult to agree on joint strategies. However, the search for effective, consistent multilateral frameworks is as urgent as it is necessary.

We believe that problems associated with consumption, the production chain and illicit trafficking in substances and other related phenomena, such as corruption, violence and money-laundering, have a profound impact on the health of our citizens. That affects the economic and political dynamic of our countries, the standards that make up the social fabric of our communities and, above all, our national and international security. In that regard, Chile is a transit country for illicit drug trafficking. Faced with a global challenge that knows no borders and which constantly reinvents itself by bringing in new substances and mechanisms for trafficking, we must act in unison, with pragmatism and with full respect for human rights, searching for the consequences of the problem and its structural causes.

Chile believes that five aspects should mark out the way forward after this special session.

First, we believe in the importance of achieving a balance in the strategies for each of the various aspects of the world drug problem, namely, supply, demand and international coordination and cooperation.

Secondly, we must understand that human rights are indisputable and absolute. In that regard, we regret that there still exist countries in which crimes related to drug trafficking are punished by the death penalty.

Thirdly, we must establish public health as a priority. Without treatment and rehabilitation systems, but above all, without prevention, we will not be able to respond to that phenomenon.

Fourthly, we must recognize the importance of inclusive and sustainable development. Without opportunities and inclusion, without jobs, without societies seeking justice and equality, the fight against drugs will be ineffective.

Fifthly and finally, we believe that it isvital to incorporate a gender perspective and the inclusion of women in the design and implementation of drug policies.

We trust in active multilateralism as a mechanism for designing strategies to deal with complex challenges such as this one. We are confident that the commitments made here will be effective in creating a horizon safe, peaceful and fair for all.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Jigmeddash Bayartsetseg, State Secretary of the Ministry of Justice of Mongolia.

Ms. Bayartsetseg (Mongolia): It is my honour and privilege to address, on behalf of the Government of Mongolia, this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem.

At the outset, let me reaffirm my Government's full commitment to the effective implementation of the three international drug-control conventions. In 1990, Mongolia ratified the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs; in 1999, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances; and in 2001, the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. Mongolia is a strong supporter of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action, adopted in 2009, which seeks to reduce significantly by 2019 the cultivation and production of drugs, the demand for drugs and health-related risks. Mongolia also welcomes and supports the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) of this special session.

The growth in drug trafficking has led not only to rising drug demand, but also to a growing income source that is directly interlinked with money-laundering, corruption and, subsequently, to transnational organized crime. In Mongolia, drug-related crimes have increased by 69 per cent. The number of women, for instance, involved in drug-related crimes has doubled in the past two years. The Government of Mongolia therefore attaches great importance to strengthening national legislative and regulatory responses to challenges resulting from that crime.

We have initiated comprehensive criminal-justice reform with the aim of combating the newly emerging transnational crimes, including illicit drug trafficking. As part of that reform initiative, we have revised the criminal code and the criminal procedure code, together with enacting a set of laws to strengthen the criminal-justice system in accordance with international standards. We have fully abolished the death penalty for all crimes, including drug-related crimes. The Government of Mongolia's policy on combating drug crimes focuses on supply reduction and criminalizes and prosecutes drug-related crimes. In addition, the law against money-laundering and terrorism financing was recently amended, and we cooperate closely with the Financial Action Task Force on money-laundering.

We reaffirm our determination to tackle the drug problem and to promote a society free of drug abuse. There are persistent and evolving challenges, which require a balanced approach, including more focus on public awareness of the risks of the illicit use of narcotics and on rehabilitation and health services for drug users. In 2012, the Government of Mongolia approved a programme to increase awareness among the public of the drug problem. The programme was implemented successfully at the national level with efforts targeted at high schools and universities. The Ministry of Justice also introduced an anti-drug campaign by establishing a national committee composed of the Ministry of Health, the police, the Intelligence Agency, the Border Security Agency and the Office of the General Prosecutor to prevent, combat and take effective measures against illicit drug use and trafficking. We have 21 crime-prevention subcommittees that function in each province, working directly on the ground with youth to promote healthy activities and lifestyles. Moreover, in the past three years, our Government has carried out extensive activities to eradicate cannabis cultivation.

In order to effectively combat illicit trafficking, it is essential to have capable and skilled law enforcement.

We are striving to improve the capacity of our law-enforcement agencies, particularly the police and border officers. Within that effort, the Government of Mongolia has adopted border-security management and immigration policies and has taken the necessary measures for capacity-building in the law-enforcement sector. Despite those efforts, law-enforcement agencies confront challenges such as a lack of the advanced skills and resources needed to investigate complex transnational trafficking offences.

The world drug problem remains a common and shared responsibility that should be addressed in a multilateral setting through effective and increased international cooperation. We therefore call on all relevant United Nations bodies to assist with the implementation of the relevant international instruments and to provide technical assistance to Member States to enhance their capacities to effectively address and counter the world drug problem.

Moreover, bilateral cooperation, especially cross-border cooperation, needs to be strengthened in order to tackle drug-related problems. Effective bilateral instruments include mutual legal-assistance agreements between countries on criminal matters. Mongolia has signed 23 mutual legal-assistance and extradition agreements with nine countries and envisages concluding more such agreements in the near future. We encourage and propose the conclusion of mutual legal-assistance agreements and other bilateral instruments and cooperation.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the Government of Mongolia's firm commitment to continued and strengthened cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other United Nations institutions and regional mechanisms for the strengthening of partnerships against the world drug problem.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mrs. María Rubiales de Chamorro, Head of the delegation of the Republic of Nicaragua.

Mrs. Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Nicaragua aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/S-30/PV.1).

The world drug problem is a serious threat to the peace and sovereignty of States, undermining the socioeconomic and political stability and sustainable development of our peoples. Our Government, led by the President, Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra, maintains a firm position in relation to the world drug problem based on comprehensive care and treatment. Nicaragua, in the very heart of Central America, is neither a producer nor a consumer of drugs. It is, however, a country situated, unfortunately, in a transit region. We acknowledge the full relevance of the United Nations conventions on narcotics — that of 1961 with its 1972 Protocol, and those of 1971 and 1998 — and we call for their effective implementation.

The deregulation and legalization of drugs does not represent a viable option, because it encourages the use of drugs and is contrary to the international instruments that are currently in force and form the key elements of the system on drug prohibition. The world drug problem must be tackled while respecting the national priorities of States and the particularities of their respective national legal systems, strictly abiding by the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The world drug problem forms an integral part of the larger problem of transnational organized crime and drug trafficking, which has led to high levels of violence and insecurity, affecting many regions and countries of the world.

I would like to reaffirm the principle of common, shared and differentiated responsibility. From that perspective, we support the broadest possible international cooperation, including the exchange of experience and best practices and encourage making available more financial and logistical resources to transit countries, so that we can move forward with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1).

The world drug problem remains a challenge for global and regional security and the health and welfare of humankind. We have therefore implemented public policies and drug strategies centred on the human being, the family and the community, within the framework of the principle of sovereign security. Nicaragua does not support lists and rejects unilateral certifications and similar measures relating to the drug problem.

Within the framework of our Christian, socialist and solidarity model, designed to address the problems caused by drug trafficking, we have implemented the following actions, which are noted in the document that is circulating — the strategy of a containment wall against drug trafficking; the strategy of citizen

and human security under the model of prevention, proactivity and community; the national campaign entitled "A Nicaragua free of drugs"; and an effective criminal-justice system, based on the principle of proportionality. In Nicaragua, the death penalty does not exist. Our approach has made Nicaragua into a country with one of the highest levels of security for our citizens on our continent.

In conclusion, we participated in the Vienna discussions and we are participating in this special session in order to reflect on the world drug problem and to analyse and discuss the effective means needed to strengthen international efforts aimed at finding solutions for the betterment of all our peoples.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of Finland.

Mr. Sauer (Finland): Finland fully aligns itself with the statements made by the observer of the European Union (EU) on behalf of its member States during this special session (see A/S-30/PV.1).

We note that several important issues could not be addressed in the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex); nevertheless, we regard the document as an achievement. Finland believes that the international drug-control conventions need to be implemented comprehensively with respect for a human-rights-based approach, as the health, well-being and safety of people and societies should be at the core of drug policy. In that context, we would like to reiterate the calls made by several delegations for the abolition of the death penalty.

In Finland, successfully applied harm-reduction measures have not changed our commitment to implementing the international drug-control conventions. We have a comprehensive ban on drugs. But at the same time, we do see that those who need help also have a right to services. The positive effects of harm reduction are tangible in Finland. We have fewer new HIV infections each year among drug-injecting users. Providing injection equipment, vaccinations, anonymous HIV/AIDS and hepatitis testing, and making available sexual and reproductive health measures, as well as opioid substitution treatment, have measurably improved the health of the target populations. Evidence shows that those measures have reduced drug-related criminality and increased security in our communities.

We have learned that if we really want to reach out to the most disadvantaged drug users and to develop services that are best for them, target-group participation is essential. In our national drug policy, cross-cutting issues such as gender concerns have been taken into consideration. However, we acknowledge that further work remains to be done in addressing the needs of, inter alia, sexual minorities.

We also wish to raise our concern over the emergence of new psychoactive substances. As the EU delegation has already highlighted, we would like to reiterate our commitment to address the growing challenges and threats posed by such new substances, especially to young people.

In Finland, one of our strengths is the inter-agency cooperation among the police, customs agents and border guards. Intelligence gathered by law enforcement and other relevant authorities is shared, and cases are analysed jointly and responded to in a coordinated manner. Notably, the police also play a key role in operational harm-reduction measures. We would also like to highlight the fact that joint crime investigations with other countries, particularly the implementation of the concept of joint investigation teams, truly improve international cooperation. As a result, investigation becomes more effective, and criminal liability is established in the right place. Finland regards that cooperation as very successful.

Finland does not see the key question with regard to today's drug policies as being whether to support health- or control-based policies. We urge States to promote overall participatory and inclusive policies to deal with the diverse realities and challenges that States face. We know from experience that, in order to achieve the best results in health and well-being, multidisciplinary cooperation among international agencies, national authorities and stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and grass-roots actors, is needed. In our view, therefore, a more participatory policy approach to the implementation of the recommendations of the special session's outcome document can contribute to wider achievement of the important Sustainable Development Goals in addressing the world drug problem.

Finally, while closely following the discussions and negotiations leading up to the current special session, Finland feels that there is indeed room for more inclusive participation in tackling the world drug problem.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Mustafizur Rahman, Director General in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Mr. Rahman (Bangladesh): I am delighted to address this special session on the world drug problem. This gathering provides us an important opportunity to strengthen our resolve in addressing this formidable challenge of our time. The drug problem affects every nation and all sectors of society. No country can claim to be free of that scourge. Addressing the drug problem will therefore require the active and continued involvement of all Governments, all societies. It is a common and shared responsibility of us all.

Clearly, the drug problem has many dimensions and many facets. It affects health, human rights and sustainable development, among others. It leads to corruption and organized crime. Its abuse causes tragic and terrible human costs to users, their families and their communities. Drug-trafficking and organized criminal networks fuel violence and feed corruption. Profits from drug trafficking are funding terrorism and violent extremism. We must end the exploitation by unscrupulous individuals and groups of vulnerable people susceptible to drug use in our societies.

Last year, global leaders adopted a transformative agenda for sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). Under Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Member States agreed to strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and the harmful use of alcohol, a goal that we must all strive towards. In fact, addressing the world drug problem is not just an issue for SDG 3, but something that impacts many other SDGs. It is also linked to issues such as organized crime, health and public well-being, which are integral factors in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Countering drug-related crimes and corruption is imperative so as to achieve stable societies and effective institutions, which constitute a foundation for sustainable development. Drugs affect not only development and a life of dignity, but also stability and security.

The Government of Bangladesh attaches great importance to combating the drug problem. We have been carrying out our anti-drug campaign in collaboration with all stakeholders and the involvement of civil society, non-governmental organizations and relevant international entities. We have a robust legal framework in place. Our national narcotic control act was enacted in 1990, and supplemented later by a number of relevant rules, strategies and programmes. Drugs addicts are being provided with the necessary treatment and rehabilitation facilities. We have also initiated a massive anti-drug awareness campaign on countering the drug problem. We have strengthened the capacity of our law-enforcement agencies to combat drug trafficking and the abuse of drugs.

At the regional level, Bangladesh is party to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. We have signed memorandums of understanding with many regional countries, such as Myanmar, India and the Islamic Republic of Iran, on preventing illicit trafficking in drugs. We are working in close partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), the International Narcotics Control Board, Interpol and the SAARC drug offence monitoring desk to combat the challenge of illicit drugs.

We realize that tackling illicit drugs requires a long-term, integrated and multidisciplinary approach. It calls for coherence among our public health, social, educational, sustainable development and law-enforcement policies. It entails the engagement of all stakeholders at the local, regional and international levels. In that regard, we welcome the adoption of the important outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), which reaffirms our joint commitment to effectively address and counter the drug problem worldwide. The outcome includes important recommendations on the wide range of aspects of the problem; its effective implementation would take us a long way in fighting this global scourge.

We look forward to the continuing role of the CND as the policymaking body of the United Nations with the primary responsibility for drug-control matters. We also recognize the good work done by UNODC as the leading entity in the United Nations system for addressing and countering the world drug problem. On our part, we stand ready to work with all concerned to fight drugs for the well-being of our generation and those that follow.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Manongi (United Republic of Tanzania): The United Republic of Tanzania recognizes that drugs have destroyed many lives and that, for too many years, Government policies have not been very successful. We accept that it is time for all of us to adopt new approaches. We therefore commend the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, whose preparatory work led to this special session of the General Assembly, and we welcome the outcome document adopted by the Assembly (resolution S-30/1, annex).

We also recognize that we stand at a turning point where the new dispensation demands that scientific evidence and our concern for health and human rights shape our national and international drug intervention policies. It is in that regard that Tanzania sees this special session as presenting a watershed opportunity to rebalance and harmonize international and national policies on drugs. We therefore believe in the value, and indeed the imperative, of adopting and implementing the outcome document. It should be the bedrock of our common approach and renewed effort in addressing the challenges we face. We also acknowledge that this undertaking must be grounded in the principles of human rights, equity and social justice.

When it comes to combating the global drug problem, our collective credibility is on the line. The implementation of the relevant key international instruments that constitute the cornerstone of the international drug-control system has not proved outstanding. We have often claimed that we need to do more and better to tackle this malady that poses a serious threat to human life and undermines development. It is a complex problem that does not lend itself to easy solutions; nonetheless, we cannot afford to fail.

As we move forward, our objective must be to focus on reducing the number of people who use drugs, as well as that of those who die from drug use. We should also ensure that minor offenders do not end up in jail, where their drug-related problems might only worsen. We must promote a health and human rights approach to the drug problem. We are conscious that this objective will be successful only as a result of a collective endeavour, nationally and globally.

Tanzania has not been spared by the world drug problem. Illicit drugs trafficked from other regions are increasingly crossing our borders, with some remaining in our communities and inflicting harm upon vulnerable people, including persons who already suffer from multiple forms of poverty. The drug problem inhibits our collective vision for a life of dignity for all and incapacitates the workforce needed to achieve our aspiration for social and economic development. It fuels serious crimes, including wildlife and forestry crimes, and places additional burdens on law-enforcement agencies and our national health systems.

In the meantime, our national efforts in confronting the menace include establishing support systems for addicted persons who also risk being exposed to HIV and hepatitis B and C. We continue to identify and monitor trends in the prevalence and distribution of psychoactive substances. We also monitor methods of use and their related consequences. We are also strengthening our national legislative, regulatory and operational responses with different stakeholders, including educational, health and law-enforcement authorities as well as non-governmental organizations and civil society.

Transnational organized crime and drug trafficking have a destabilizing effect on State security. We believe that the implementation of conventions on transnational organized crime and corruption will also contribute to our individual and collective efforts in addressing the drug problem. In addition, we propose holding discussions at the level of the General Assembly to consider the scope of, and appropriate interventions against, this threat, as well as the progress being made in that regard.

Even as we reaffirm our commitment to implementing the outcome document, we believe that international cooperation is indispensable for fulfilling its goals. We also believe that programmes focused on alternative livelihoods in drug-producing countries will reduce the flow of illicit drugs to our countries. We must therefore seek multidisciplinary, mutually reinforcing and balanced approaches aimed at providing effective supply and demand reduction strategies.

In conclusion, we hold the view that we should not permit ourselves to become divided over policy preferences with regard to applicable penalties. The fact that the Assembly is in full agreement on the severity of the problem and that we must act collectively and urgently is, in itself, a great achievement.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Principality of Monaco.

Ms. Picco (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): The Principality of Monaco wishes to reiterate its strong commitment to addressing the world drug problem while respecting fundamental human rights, the rule of law and the right to universal access to care. Monaco categorically opposes the use of the death penalty under any circumstances.

My delegation thanks the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for their comprehensive and humane approach to this scourge, which undermines our societies, hinders our development efforts and contributes to the spread of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, hepatitis and other blood-borne diseases.

Civil society must be our first partner in implementing the commitments made at the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, in particular Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 16.

My Government is preparing a new anti-drug action plan that will be part of its efforts to combat all addictions. Protecting young people is a priority. Prevention programmes in the form of health education on topics tailored to various age groups have been implemented in schools, with the assistance of multi-stakeholder committees on health and citizenship education. Identifying troubled youth at an early date is another area of prevention where the different structures involved work as a network.

To prevent consequences for public health, the Principality of Monaco complements its preventive efforts with access to speedy and effective care. Individual-centred care centres combine detoxification and counselling in order to ensure rehabilitation and social reintegration. Furthermore, in the health sector, focus is placed on youth with the establishment of "young consumer" consultations that provide appropriate care. The associations Jeune, J'écoute and Allô Parents provide anonymous support, enabling the families concerned not to remain isolated.

Monaco is party to all international instruments related to drugs and adapts its legislation as new illicit products emerge. On 1 January, Monaco became the thirty-eighth member of the Council of Europe's Cooperation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs, also known as the Pompidou Group.

We firmly believe that only increased international cooperation, through an integrated, multidisciplinary and balanced approach — can we stem the threat of the international drug trade and all criminal activities associated with it. That is why Monaco will continue to provide unwavering police and judicial cooperation. We reiterate our commitment to combat transnational organized crime.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of Slovenia.

Mr. Logar (Slovenia): At the outset, Slovenia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1). Allow me to share some additional remarks in my national capacity.

In Slovenia we are committed to the balanced implementation of the pillars of demand and supply reduction and to international cooperation under the principle of common and shared responsibility. We are glad that is reflected in the outcome document of this special session (resolution S-30/1, annex). We also welcome the resolution's focus on human rights and public health, the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, new challenges and threats, as well as alternative development. We believe that the flexibility of the three United Nations drug-control conventions, together with the universal human rights instruments, provide a good basis for such policy.

The factors that place people at risk of using drugs vary throughout the world, as do the structures and resources to protect the health of those individuals, their families and societies. On the other hand, there are proven policies and interventions to prevent people from starting to use drugs and to treat drug use disorders.

Slovenia has established and has been systematically developing drug legislation and policies for a number of years. My country decriminalized the possession of a small quantity of any drug for personal use in 1999, with the aim of encouraging treatment instead of penalization. Emphasis has always been placed on public health aspects, including harm reduction programmes and substitution treatment.

In Slovenia we firmly believe that all drug programmes should be evidence-based, evaluated and accessible to all people with drug-use disorders. We would therefore like to underline the importance

of developing a multisectoral and fully coordinated approach. Such an approach includes the cooperation of multiple agencies from different fields, such as education, social welfare, health and law enforcement. Only together can they develop a full continuum of demand-reduction programmes that promote prevention, early detection and intervention, treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration for all people suffering from substance use disorders. In Slovenia it is the Ministry of Health that coordinates that work.

We also believe that harm-reduction measures are indispensable for successfully solving the drug problem, including for preventing the transmission of infections such as HIV and hepatitis. Such programmes, which are based on respect for human rights and human dignity, have been rigorously evaluated in many countries, and their results demonstrate their effectiveness.

While we welcome the positive elements in the resolution, we truly regret that it was not possible to include language on the death penalty. Slovenia resolutely opposes the use of capital punishment under any circumstances.

Slovenia has positive experience to share with regard to addressing the drug problem. We are striving for enhanced regional cooperation, particularly in South-East Europe. A programme of bilateral technical assistance for countries of the region was set up five years ago and promotes balanced drug policy measures, from countering drug trafficking to treating drug-use disorders.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that the world drug problem can be solved only through international cooperation and in a coordinated and comprehensive manner. Progress must be based on verifiable facts and reasoning, and broad dialogue between all stakeholders must be promoted. On behalf of Slovenia, let me therefore express the sincere hope that our joint efforts will lead to a comprehensive and humane drug policy that will put people and their health first.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of Libya.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am very pleased to see you presiding over our work, Madam.

The holding of this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem is a testament to increased global awareness of the drug problem and its tragic consequences on health and economies, as well as on the security of States. Illicit drug trafficking finds fertile ground where State institutions, in particular security institutions, are weak. Illicit drug use by young people and children is very often linked to poverty, fear and instability. It can also be linked to the lack of opportunity for a better future due to unemployment and social marginalization. There is no doubt that illicit drug trafficking increases crime, violence and corruption rates, and it places a terrible burden on the human and financial resources of States.

This is a worldwide problem with transnational effects. Fighting it therefore calls for cooperation and coordination on security at the international and regional levels, as well as an exchange of information to fight narcotic and psychotropic drugs and to bring an end to the trafficking of those substances. The various aspects of this problem, however, cannot be countered in terms of security alone. It must be at the centre of national and regional development programmes and strategies, in particular by combating the cultivation of plants used to manufacture psychotropic drugs, and combating other effects, such as money laundering and flows of profits made from drug trafficking. It is also necessary to address the reasons for drug use, in particular by providing opportunities for jobs and education for all. Legislation on drug use should also be improved, while responses should not be primarily based on punishment. Reforms are needed.

Libya reaffirms the collective responsibility for dealing with this problem. We also reaffirm our commitment to the various relevant international instruments. We welcome the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime as well as of all the relevant institutions, and call for strengthening their capacities so that they can provide technical support to Member States. We also call on the international community to provide financial and technical assistance to other Member States, particularly developing States, with a view to building their own capacities to counter the problem.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Mr. Hyassat (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): My Government has been working arduously on Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 16 to ensure that everyone in our country can live a prosperous life with access

to health care. I would like to reiterate that, given the impact of drugs on development and its relationship to crime, we need to strengthen international cooperation. In that regard, we welcome the adoption of resolution S-30/1, which provides a practical framework to supplement international conventions. Its objectives must be fully implemented and partnerships must be set up with all involved, including young people and civil society, so as to achieve real progress and fulfil our aspirations.

The Kingdom of Jordan, under King Abdullah II, is stepping up efforts to combat the scourge of crime and drugs. We have made ongoing efforts to strengthen our legislative and institutional framework. Recently, we prepared draft legislation that should be more effective in dealing with and preventing this scourge. We have also established a national committee tasked with examining what efforts need to be made to combat the scourge of drugs. That draft legislation should be adopted shortly. We also have in place a comprehensive strategy to combat drugs that involves the participation of all institutions interested in the fight against drugs, be they public or private. We declared 2016 as the year to combat drug abuse in order to boost drug-control efforts and combat illicit trafficking in psychotropic substances.

At the regional and international levels, Jordan has stepped up cooperation with other States and institutions and recently held, with the cooperation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the first regional meeting. We are the first country in the region to apply the vessel drug-control system. In that regard, we should continue to work to strengthen the capacity of the Office and the United Nations to assist States in the implementation of that pioneering project.

In terms of armed conflict, the threats faced by several parties across the world, which complicate the fight against drugs and encourage illicit trafficking in neighbouring countries, affect Jordan, in particular its security services. Given the enormous number of refugees we host, concerted efforts on the part of the international community to support Jordan, based on the principle of collective responsibility, are needed.

In conclusion, we wish to renew our support for UNODC. We trust that it will continue to work effectively to stop the scourge of drugs.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of El Salvador.

Mr. Castaneda (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): El Salvador comes to this special session of the General Assembly convinced that the fight against the world drug problem is an inescapable and urgent commitment. The President of the Republic, Salvador Sánchez Cerén, has expressed his particular interest, and that of his Government, in working arduously to fight drugs. We are convinced that policies should put the interest of human beings and respect for their fundamental rights, with a focus on gender focus.

I wish to express my Government's commitment to comply with the relevant international instruments, in particular the three United Nations conventions on drugs. The new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and the accomplishment of its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which we agreed on here at Headquarters, must be translated into reality for the benefit of our societies.

With both a sense of commitment and gratitude, El Salvador represented the Groupo of Latin American and Caribbean States on the preparatory board for this special session. We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our desire to work together and contribute, while also respecting differences and strengthening understanding and dialogue in order to achieve the implementation of comprehensive policies to address the world drug problem.

This special session is a major political commitment towards 2019, and is, in addition, a milestone for strengthening subregional, regional and international cooperation. Therefore, we must ensure that technical and financial assistance are coherent and consistent with the various existing dimensions and realities, bearing in mind that we are facing a common problem and that we have shared but differentiated responsibilities.

This meeting is an opportunity to see the global picture in all its complexity, taking into consideration the progress, achievements, weaknesses, as well as the new experiences of our countries in recent years. Our common goal is to define a comprehensive international drug policy that is in line with current challenges and based on respect for human dignity.

El Salvador is convinced that this problem requires comprehensive and balanced actions aimed

at promoting the health and welfare of the individual, family and community. El Salvador, as members know, is not a country of massive drug consumption. Neither is it a drug-producing country. It is a transit country, as are most of those countries represented here today. We therefore have a specific issue that we would like to see more clearly reflected in the overall strategy established by the United Nations to address the drug problem.

Specifically, the link between our country and international drug-smuggling operators with specific extralegal structures has given rise to violence, deep social conflict and the loss of human life, resulting in waning investment opportunities for the development of our communities. That is what led us to incorporate a socioeconomic dimension in our strategic plan against drugs, which was approved in 2011 and is being renewed this year, its fifth year of existence.

The obvious existing link between youth gangs — or maras, as we call them — and drug trafficking, money laundering, and illicit trafficking in arms and persons constitutes a growing threat to the safety of not only Salvadorans, but the entire Central American region. We must therefore join efforts among all national sectors to change that reality.

El Salvador is committed to strengthening the national anti-drug strategy, incorporating policies, objectives, resources and institutional efforts, in both the public and private sectors. In that effort, the cooperation of friendly countries is essential for our subregion to strengthen its institutions, preserve the human rights of citizens and implement initiatives to facilitate the socioecoomic reintegration of young people involved in illegal activities. However, without opportunities for decent work, vocational training and recreational activities, our efforts to encourage our youth to abandon gang ties and have a genuine, humane future will be unsuccessful.

In conclusion, let me emphasize that the commitment expressed during this special session by Member States, as well as by international organizations and civil society, bears witness to a strong will to go beyond dialogue and to make a commitment to act firmly with respect for our differences, and with the strong conviction that together we can be the architects of a society free of drug abuse.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan): I have the honour to deliver the statement of His Excellency the Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Sudan, who, unfortunately, was not able to participate in this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem due to the non-issuance of an entry visa by the host country.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

At the outset, the Sudan aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations in Vienna on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/S-30/PV.2). We also align ourselves with the group of like-minded States with regard to the topic at hand.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to applaud the valuable efforts and contributions made by all the relevant entities and parties that have led to the convening of this special session. We welcome the holding of this special session and affirm its importance at a time when the world drug problem is growing increasingly complicated. Without a doubt, this session represents an important opportunity to consider and assess the situation and to develop a vision and recommendations on how to effectively address the various drug-related issues.

My delegation reaffirms its commitment to the framework provided by the three relevant international drug-control conventions, in addition to the Political Declaration and Plan of Action, as the appropriate and adequate basis to address the issue of drugs. In addition to being comprehensive and flexible, which is necessary to allow all Member States and other actors to face the drug problem, we also find that the framework is a practical one with which to implement the principles of international cooperation on the basis of common but differentiated responsibility. We believe that regional, international and bilateral cooperation are necessary to achieve a world free of drugs, in particular given the means employed by drug gangs to carry out their activities. In that regard, my delegation reiterates the importance of strengthening all means of solidarity and cooperation among nations, particularly through the sharing of intelligence and the detection of illicit financial flows. The Sudan has been successful in the detection of several drug-trafficking cases. In that regard, I would like to commend the cooperation by the relevant authorities in my country with those of other countries, in particular the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Lebanon.

Experience has proved that addressing the drug problem in all of its complexities requires a variety of initiatives, including health, economic, development, security and legal solutions. I wish to reiterate the commitment of the Sudan, as part of a comprehensive framework of development policies, to achieve a secure society. In that vein, and due to our belief in the importance of cooperation in the area of security, we have endeavoured to cooperate and to strengthen the relationship between society and law-enforcement agencies. We have implemented a programme in residential areas, which has had excellent results in terms of reducing crime levels.

In order to strengthen the legislative and regulatory framework with regard to drugs, in 2015 we adopted a national strategy with such related legislation as a law to combat money-laundering and the financing of terrorism. Pursuant to that law, a financial investigations unit was established and given the requisite autonomy to undertake full investigations. We have also issued guidelines and set up procedures for international cooperation with a view to addressing legal matters, in the form of commissions empowered to examine witnesses, extradite persons charged with drug crimes, and call for the forfeiture of funds. We have also amended our drug-trafficking law to grant the necessary authority to the relevant entities.

We have identified trends in the area of drug use in my country. As a result, we have seen an increase in the amount of substances confiscated and in the number of drug-trafficking cases involving trafficking towards Europe and the Arab Gulf States. We have detected a strengthening of the relationship between drug traffickers and those who are cultivating the drug-precursor plants. We have also observed an increase in the abuse of medicinal substances and a greater diversity of such substances entering our country. The situation in my country has changed to the extent that we are seeing an expansion in the development of heptagon pills. We recently seized a laboratory that was manufacturing such pills for drug traffickers.

We are striving to confiscate improperly obtained pharmaceutical substances and to prevent their abuse. Having identified new types of drugs, including psychotropic substances, my country has taken steps to allow for their confiscation, in particular by developing a manual of standardized procedures for the confiscation of such substances. Last March, we held a national forum of the relevant parties to coordinate all these efforts.

In conclusion, my delegation attaches great importance to drug-replacement programmes, which are one of the most effective ways to combat drugs. We look forward to entering into joint projects with international organizations and donors to make such programmes viable. We underscore our policy to criminalize drugs and the use of drugs. Any leniency in that regard will have a negative impact in the short and long term and will open the door to drug gangs taking advantage of indecisiveness.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Slovak Republic.

Ms. Algayerová (Slovakia): We fully align ourselves with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1). I would also like to add few words on behalf of Slovakia, acting in my national capacity.

The special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem is a unique global forum for reviewing the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, and for discussing our achievements thanks to and the challenges that have arisen from the operation of our national drug policies.

Slovakia welcomes the adoption of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) following the comprehensive and inclusive preparatory process. The document reiterates our commitment to the goals and objectives of the three international drug-control conventions, including the health and welfare of humankind. The three drug-control conventions and the universal human rights instruments are cornerstones of international drug policies. Slovakia believes that drug policies should follow an integrated, balanced and evidence-based approach. Respect for human rights should be an integral part of our efforts. We therefore regret that the outcome document fails to include language on the abolition of death penalty for drug offences.

The basic programmatic document for the Slovak drug policy is our national drug strategy for the period 2013-2020 and related action plans being implemented

by the relevant Slovak ministries. The overall aim of the strategy is to contribute to reducing drug demand and drug supply, as well as mitigating the health and social risks and harm caused by drugs. The strategy has been built on an awareness of current drug problems, including the use polysubstances and stimulants, including methamphetamine, the need to control medications containing psychoactive or drug-precursor ingredients, the challenges posed by blood-borne viruses, the need to improve coverage for treatment services and the changing dynamics of drug markets.

The dominant characteristic of the strategy is its integrated and balanced approach. Another important element of our drug policy is coordination and cooperation at the national, regional and international levels. New challenges such as, inter alia, the rapid emergence of new psychoactive substances require greater cooperation and a stepped-up exchange of information among Member States. Slovakia also supports the involvement of civil society and the scientific community as well as the coordination among the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Health Organization and other United Nations entities and specialized agencies.

We believe that this special session and its outcome document create a solid basis for further international community action in the coming period and for the Review of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action to be held in 2019.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Camillo Gonsalves, Minister of Economic Planning, Sustainable Development, Industry, Information and Labour of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Gonsalves (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): In 1998, the General Assembly special session on drugs decided to "establish the year 2008" — 2008 — "as a target date for States, with a view to eliminating or significantly reducing the illicit manufacture, marketing and tracking of psychotropic substances, including synthetic drugs". The year after that self-imposed 2008 deadline, at the high-level segment of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Member States met again and established a new cut-off date for the elimination of psychotropic drugs: the year 2019. Today, I am surprising no one by predicting that we will not meet our 2019 target.

For this United Nations process to maintain any semblance of credibility, this week's gathering cannot be another exercise in naive prescriptions, repetition of failed measures or kicking the can down the road. We must instead engage in an honest clear-eyed analysis of what works, what is realistically achievable, and what new measures can address our shared goal of a world freed from the scourges of drug addicts, drug dealers and a destabilizing global drug trade.

The impacts and potential solutions to the world drug problem vary depending on where one stands. States that primarily supply, demand or serve as transit points for narcotics have very different views on effective drug-control strategies. Historically, the traditional approach to the international narcotics trade has had a disproportionate impact on developing nations, the poor and particular racial and ethnic groups. Those traditional approaches have remained troublingly static in a rapidly changing world.

The by-products of applying outmoded solutions to an evolving problem include irreconcilable inconsistencies in trade and immigration policy, in the prevalence of organized crime and in the manner in which a State's right to development is adversely affected by global law-enforcement and interdiction measures. It is entirely possible that more lives have been lost to the war on drugs and rival drug gangs than to the actual abuse of drugs. At the same time, the obscene sums spent on interdiction, enforcement and eradication have nonetheless spurred the growth of a global illicit drug trade worth hundreds of billions of dollars.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reiterates the caution issued yesterday by the representative of Jamaica (see A/S-30/PV.3) that the solutions to the world drug problem are not one-size-fits-all and that approaches must be sensitive to the imperatives of culture, religion and science. In that regard, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has established a regional commission on marijuana to conduct a rigorous inquiry into the social, economic, health and legal issues surrounding marijuana use in the region and to advise on whether there should be a change in the current drug classification of marijuana, thereby making the drug more accessible for a particular range of users.

In examining the feasibility and desirability of the production and use of cannabis for medicinal purposes

and the decriminalization of small quantities of the plant for personal or religious use, the Commission will no doubt be mindful of recent trends in the decriminalization and legalization of marijuana in other States, the sometimes inconsistent approaches within States, and the changing perspectives on marijuana use worldwide. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is hopeful that the CARICOM Commission will soon produce a set of recommendations that can be accepted and applied across the region.

However, the potential for liberalization of the legal status of marijuana should not be misconstrued as a case of "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em." Quite the contrary, it represents a strong desire to adhere to international commitments by properly focusing efforts and limited resources on the control of illicit drug flows, the rehabilitation of users and a firm and unyielding approach to the brutal criminal gangs that wreak havoc within our communities.

The road to our current predicament has been paved with the good intentions of well-meaning citizens and the poll-tested tough talk of those who have leveraged fear, anger and loss of victims of the war on drugs to their collective advantage. The road out of this cul-de-sac of trite, ineffective rhetoric requires an approach that is focused not on drugs but on the people and populations affected by addiction, abuse, violence and fear. It demands the courage of new thinking and innovative approaches. Ten years from today, let it not be said that the international community continued to delude itself about the efficacy of its war on drugs. Instead, let this special session be remembered as the turning point in crafting meaningful, workable, country-specific solutions to a vexing but eminently solvable problem.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of Maldives.

Ms. Mohamed Didi (Maldives): The Maldives believes this session, the first special session of the General Assembly since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), provides a unique opportunity to galvanize international cooperation in order to effectively address and counter the world drug problem. The Maldives remains confident that target 3.5 of the Agenda, on strengthening prevention and narcotic drug abuse, will provide impetus to international efforts aimed at addressing the world drug problem. We also stress the importance of designing evidence-based drug policies grounded in reliable data, science and analysis. In this regard, we note that the global indicator framework being developed for the 2030 Agenda has provided a real opportunity for framing the world drug problem by selecting the right indicators. The Maldives furthermore believes that critical to addressing the growing international nature of this phenomenon is the political will and ability of all members to implement evidence-based policies and practices in line with the three international conventions on drug matters.

The Maldives is an archipelago of 1,192 islands situated in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Although we are neither a producer nor a manufacturer of illicit drugs, our location makes us a vulnerable point for illegal shipments of precursor chemicals and drugs meant for other ports. This problem has evolved with the increasing number of substance users and the increasing prevalence of drug abuse among young people. Young people make up 46 per cent of the entire Maldivian population. The Maldives believes that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to countering the world drug problem and that each country's policies must address its own specific needs.

The Maldives' national strategy to tackle the issue of drugs is based on four pillars: prevention; treatment and social reintegration; governance and system development; and efforts to reduce the drug supply. These four pillars are complementary to one another and constitute areas of action. The Maldives national drug policies are underpinned not just by our firm conviction that we need to build safer and more just societies, but are also supported by human-rights principles, which place people at the centre.

The enactment of the Drugs Act in 2011, repealing the 1977 Drugs Act, was a milestone in the Government's efforts to combat drug abuse and drug-related offences. The new law represents a paradigm shift in viewing drug offenders as victims in need of rehabilitation. The legislation provides for the prevention of the use, peddling and trafficking of drugs and includes measures to motivate drug-dependent persons to enrol in treatment and rehabilitation programmes with a view to facilitating their reintegration into the community as responsible citizens. The Government is also collaborating with rehabilitation centres in neighbouring countries to allow for requests to seek rehabilitation overseas, as allowed by the Drug Act.

In order to strengthen monitoring and prevention efforts, the Maldives police and border authorities have tightened surveillance across the Maldives to eliminate smuggling and distribution of drugs. In addition, starting last year, they have been using K-9 dogs to detect drug smugglers.

The issue of illicit drugs and related activities goes beyond regions, representing a global challenge. The nexus between transnational organized crime and terrorism threatens peace and security. The Maldives emphasizes the need to join forces, especially among international partners, to effectively counter the world drug problem. In line with this objective, Maldives is working with countries in its region to establish a regional coordination centre for South Asia through the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

For far too long, drugs have been tearing the social fabric of society, igniting violence, spreading disease and robbing our young people of their futures. We must seize the opportunity provided by this session to do more and to do better. The Maldives will continue to engage domestically and internationally on the world drug problem, and we will continue to do our part in advancing the international drug-policy agenda. Let the promises made in this special session assist us in changing course so that we can move towards a more peaceful, healthy and just society.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 53/216, of 23 March 1998, I now call on the observer of the World Customs Organization.

Ms. Hinojosa: On behalf of the World Customs Organization (WCO), it is a great pleasure and an honcur for me to address this special session of the General Assembly on issues of high priority in relation to the world drug problem.

The World Customs Organization is made up of180 members — the customs administrations around the world — which together process more than 98 per cent of global trade. Throughout the course of the special session, we have heard from many Heads of State and delegations about the incredible efforts under way with regard to prevention and rehabilitation of drug users. We have also heard about the importance of sensible deterrence and punishment practices for the individual drug user. But we have also heard of the importance of the rule of law in civil societies.

Customs is the first line of defence at national borders, as it is in charge of both legitimate and illegal cross-border trade. Customs' traditional role as a purely revenue-oriented agency has grown to encompass other such areas as interdicting drug trafficking and fighting terrorism, especially through the detection of small arms and strategic goods. Its role has also expanded to combating trafficking in currency, counterfeit products and environmentally sensitive goods. All in all, it addresses many facets of organized crime.

The World Customs Organization is concerned about the challenges faced by customs and its partner agencies from illicit drug trafficking. Customs administrations are per se permanently dealing with international supply-chain developments in legitimate trade. As a consequence, customs also notes new developments in illicit trade in general and in drugs in particular. The WCO strongly supports intelligence-led and risk-based customs-enforcement activities, which is a prerequisite for successful interventions, while still ensuring an adequate level of trade facilitation. That is a sensible balance to keep.

The WCO Drugs and Precursor Programme is aimed at countering the global illegal trade in substances that are subject to drug restrictions and prohibition laws. The programme consists of several major components. First, there is the Container Control Programme under the auspices of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the WCO, which now also includes an air-cargo-control segment. It also includes Project AIRCOP, which focuses on drug smuggling by air passengers, implemented in cooperation with the UNODC, Interpol and the Global K9 Forum, and the coordination and support for regional and global operations geared to tackling drug trafficking, including precursor chemicals and new psychoactive substances (NPS). It also includes the design, implementation and support of global operations together with key partner organizations in another key component of the programme, tackling different dimensions and emerging threats in drug-trafficking issues.

Just one example of the many activities implemented in this domain is Operation CATalyst, which was initiated in November 2015, to promote responses and consolidated efforts among the international customs community against the threat posed by proliferation of new psychoactive substances. The operation pulled together the participation of 94 member administrations, nine regional intelligence liaison offices and five

international organizations and enforcement bodies, including the International Narcotics Control Board, UNODC, the European Police Office, INTERPOL and the Joint Airport Interdiction Task Force. This one operation resulted in the seizure of more than 13,000 kilogrammes of drugs in 371 cases, of which 1,435 kilogrammes were specifically NPS-related.

The training of customs officers is a key element in the success of these operations, and that training plays a significant role in the framework of the support the WCO offers to its members. The training provided allows officers to learn the latest risk-management techniques, concealment methods and previously detected drug routes.

To support swift international exchange of relevant information and intelligence, the WCO provides support to the regional intelligence liaison offices, which also play an important role in capacity-building and operational activities. We also have secure international communication, which is ensured through the WCO's Customs Enforcement Network Communication Platform. Our members also provide periodic information related to their seizures at the national and regional levels.

The WCO publishes an annual illicit-trade report that contains five sections, one of which is dedicated to drugs. The objective of the report is to raise awareness on emerging threats, highlight customs efforts and contribute information to help customs authorities to develop efficient, effective strategies. The section on drugs in the *2014 Illicit Trade Report* clearly shows an increase in the new drug category of NPS, which evidences customs' proactive approach to tackling this emergent threat. Overall, there were approximately 1,250 tons of cannabis, 343 tons of psychoactive substances, 107 tons of khat, 66 tons of cocaine and 11 tons of heroin. The NPS seizures increased from approximately 3 tons in 2013 to 81 tons in 2014, to now 343 tons in 2015. This is a serious growing threat.

Finally, it is all about partnerships, and, as is evidenced by the fight against drug trafficking, a concerted approach is required. Accordingly, the WCO works closely with other law-enforcement agencies and international partners such as the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre for Combating the Illicit Trafficking of Narcotics Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Their Precursors, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, INTERPOL, the International Narcotics Control Board, the Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre and UNODC, just to name a few.

The WCO appreciates this opportunity to highlight the important role that customs administrations play in combating drug trafficking. We stand ready to collaborate with our partners and international organizations in support of our members to bring forth the necessary capacity-building, operations-interdiction and sharing of experiences and best practices in this arena.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.